

CLUSTER: EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITION

Component C/BT. 1

Children exiting Part C receive the services they need by their third birthday, when appropriate.

Data Sources:

- “Team Information Folder” and reports from the Indiana State Transition Initiative for Young Children and Families
- Unified Training System grant
- State Transition Team Work Plan
- Standardized Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- First Steps Practice Manual and Monitoring Guide
- Service Coordination Level 1 and 2 Training Curriculum and agendas
- Title 470 IAC 3.1, First Steps Early Intervention System Rules
- Title 511 Article 7, Rules 17-31, Special Education Rules
- STEPS Model and materials
- Planning Districts Continuous Improvement Monitoring Self-Assessment (2001)
- Part C Early Intervention Impact Study (2000)
- Part C database (2001)
- Part C termination reports (1999 & 2000)
- TABLE 3, Part B Individuals With Disabilities Education Act Implementation of FAPE Requirement, form OMB: 1820-0517
- Bureau of Child Development informational brochures
- First Steps Annual Performance Report (2000)
- First Steps Data and Claims Payment System County Profile Reports
- MAP to Inclusive Child Care Project
- Indiana Association of Child Care Resource and Referral “Inclusion Project”

Performance Level: Below Expectation

Conclusions:

- It is concluded that access to early childhood special education services by third birthday varies from public school planning district to planning district. It is difficult to accurately measure the percentage of children who receive services by third birthday since data is not collected in a uniform manner. There are no uniform definitions or data codes for tracking services by third birthday. There are no means to distinguish valid and invalid reasons for not meeting the timeline. There is inconsistent reporting that transition is occurring in a timely manner.
- In 1999, 13% of children exiting Part C who were not eligible for Part B received other community-based services. In 2000, 9% of children exiting the Part C program who were not eligible for Part B received other community-based services. Data shows a decrease in children receiving other appropriate services from the previous year.

- Indiana has an exemplary transition training system that provides training jointly to providers and parents in the community. The training assesses current community transition practices and implements a systematic plan for addressing the identified transition needs of the community. However, only 7 counties have requested the training and support. Fifty-eight of ninety-two counties have received the STEPS orientation and it is anticipated that the number of counties that commit to receive the training will increase.
- Although there is a strong training network for First Steps Service Coordinators, data indicates that some service coordinators are not carrying out their responsibilities and there is a need to further strengthen training and support for service coordinators.
- Input during the Public Meetings was mostly positive that transition planning results in timely provision of services. Public comment identifying concerns centered on issues of untimely transition experiences and problems with late spring and summer birthdays.
- There are a variety of programs and resources that support systems capacity-building.

Strategies:

- The State Transition Team will develop strategies for marketing community transition teams. A website will be developed to facilitate communication with all transition teams and others interested in effective transitions.
- A training module is under development to supplement required service coordinator training.
- Develop a joint training opportunity for Part C and Part B providers and families to provide a better understanding of system differences in order to provide a smoother, more effective transition.
- Revise Part C and Part B data systems so there is consistency in coding across the two systems.
- Revise the local planning district transition performance indicator to be specific regarding reasons a child does not receive services by third birthday and to include only children in transition from Part C to Part B. The CIM performance indicator for collecting this information at the local level needs to be revised to collect more accurate information.
- Revise the Part C data termination codes so that they are clearly defined and provide a guidance document on use of codes.
- Disseminate a parent satisfaction survey on transition.

INDICATOR ANALYSIS

Performance Indicator A:

Transition training is provided jointly to Parts B and C providers and parents in response to their identified needs.

Data Sources:

- “Team Information Folder” and reports from the Indiana State Transition Initiative for Young Children and Families
- Unified Training System grant
- KIDSteps Magazine, published by First Steps in the Fall of 2000 devoted to transition and distributed to 5,400 families and providers.
- Four transition booklets (Transition to Early Childhood Special Education, A Guide for Families, Bridging Early Services, A Guide for Service Providers, Hospital to Home, A Guide for Transition Planners, and Moving on to Kindergarten, A Guide for Transition to Kindergarten) published by The Department of Education, Division of Special Education in collaboration with First Steps and Head Start
- Brochure on Indiana’s State Transition Initiative for Young Children and Families describing how to access transition training.
- Guidelines for Determining the Need for Extended School Year Services, May 2001 Field Study Edition, published by the Indiana Department of Education
- A collection of transition materials collected by the State Transition Coordinator to share with local transition teams.
- Four transition training guides for Head Start Learning Communities

Conclusions:

- The Indiana State Transition Initiative for Young Children and Families, jointly funded by First Steps and the Division of Special Education, is the primary vehicle for providing training and technical assistance to communities in assessing current community transition practices, building on existing transition agreements, and in implementing a systematic plan for addressing identified transition needs. The training is modeled from the STEPS (Sequenced Transition to Education in Public Schools) Project, a federally funded Transition Outreach Project. This training is provided jointly to community partners that transition young children including First Steps and Part B early childhood special education providers as well as other stakeholders. In addition the training requires participation of parents of children with disabilities. The State Transition Team that advises the State Transition Coordinator includes representative from seven state agencies or organizations and parents of children with disabilities. Members of the State Transition Team and members of Local Transition Teams made a joint presentation on the State Transition Initiative at the 2000 and 2001 Early Childhood Education State Conference. In addition, members of the State Transition Team spoke to their respective constituencies about the transition initiative. To date fifty-eight out of ninety-two counties have gone through the STEPS orientation. Fifty-five (55) counties have completed the self-

assessment process. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the counties completing the self-assessment have identified a need for improvement and forty-nine percent (49%) of counties that completed the self-assessment process expressed a willingness to establish a STEPS trained transition team. Seven (7) counties and the State Transition Team have gone through the STEPS training and developed a one-year action plan. A year-end evaluation report documents that the Indiana State Transition Initiative has had a positive impact for communities participating in the STEPS training.

- Data sources show strong evidence of interagency collaboration on transition training. There are a variety of training formats and written resources that support effective. The training approach is collaborative and holistic including more than Part B and Part C providers.
- It is unclear why a limited number of communities have availed themselves of the opportunity to develop transition teams using the STEP model. Communities appear to be having difficulty with the paradigm shift from a one shot training approach to collaborative, on-going and systematic planning around transition. Also, communities indicate that due to other state mandated priorities and demands on their time, local participants are reluctant to commit to implementing the process unless the state requires it. However, this is a voluntary community commitment that is viewed as being in the best interest of children and families in communities.

Strategies:

- The State Transition Team will develop strategies for marketing community transition training.
- A website is under development to facilitate communication with all transition teams and others interested in effective transitions. It will facilitate access to resources such as interagency agreements and will be a vehicle for requesting technical assistance. The site will be widely publicized.

Performance Indicator B:

Trained individuals, including parents, provide transition planning.

Data Sources:

- State Transition Team Work Plan
- Standardized Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- First Steps Practice Manual
- Service Coordination Level 1 and 2 Training Curriculum and agendas
- Title 470 IAC 3.1, First Steps Early Intervention System Rules
- Title 511 Article 7, Rules 17-31, Special Education Rules
- STEPS Model and materials
- State Coordinator Work Plan in the Unified Training System Proposal
- Early Intervention Impact Study

Conclusions:

- The State Transition Team has received the STEPS training and follows the collaborative transition planning approach. The State Transition Coordinator has completed the extensive training program and is certified as a STEPS trainer. The State Transition Coordinator and two of the Regional facilitators are parents of children with disabilities. Also, to support the collaborative model, two Head Start trainers and one First Steps representative are regional facilitators. These individuals have received training to assist communities in transition planning. The community members who have been trained in the STEPS model serve as resources in their community and to other communities.
- The First Steps Service Coordinators receive training regarding transition requirements and options and begin discussing these at the initial IFSP meeting and at each subsequent IFSP meeting. Early Childhood Special Education representatives are required to participate in the transition planning conferences convened by the First Steps Service Coordinator. The state rules for both First Steps and Special Education include standards for transition and provide the authority for training on transition.
- First Steps utilizes a standardized IFSP form that includes a Transition Checklist/Outcome page to foster adherence to transition requirements. The First Steps Practice Manual also provides information on the role of the First Steps Service Coordinator. This serves as the basis for the service coordinator training.
- First Steps Service Coordinators become knowledgeable about transition through training and experience. Every service coordinator must participate in two days of Level 1 Service Coordination Training before providing services. Transition requirements are covered on the 4th day of the 4 days of Level 1 training. All level 1 training must be completed within 60 days of enrollment as a provider. From 4-1-00 to 3-31-01, 391 people participated in Level 1 training. After six months, each service

coordinator must participate in Level 2 training for two days that includes one afternoon session on transition. Level 2 must be completed no sooner than 6 months, but no later than 12 months. One hundred forty (140) participants participated in Level 2 training from 4-1-00 to 3-31-01. Also service coordinators have been trained to provide Level 1 and Level 2 training. Parents of children with special needs without the required degrees to be a service coordinator must meet all current credentialing requirements and may be associate service coordinators working under the supervision of an enrolled credentialed service coordinator specialist.

- There is a strong training network. Training is responsive to consumer needs and requests. Although service coordinators receive training over a period of time, narrative data from planning district Continuous Improvement Monitoring Self-assessments indicate that some service coordinators are not carrying out their responsibilities. There is a need to strengthen training and support for service coordinators.

Strategies:

- A training module is under development to supplement required service coordinator training.
- Provide joint training of separate systems for Part C and Part B providers and families.

Performance Indicator C:

The percentage of children with disabilities, eligible under Part B, who receive other appropriate services by their third birthday when appropriate, increases.

Data Sources:

- Continuous Monitoring Improvement (CIM) Self-Assessment and Performance Indicator number # 34
- Part C Early Intervention Impact Study (2000)
- Part C database (2001)

Conclusions:

- It is concluded that access to early childhood special education services by third birthday varies from public school planning district to planning district. It is difficult to accurately measure the percentage of children who receive services by third birthday since data is not collected in a uniform manner. There are no uniform definitions or data codes for tracking services by third birthday. There are no means to distinguish valid and invalid reasons for not meeting the timeline. The reported data appears to include all children referred to early childhood special education rather than specifically children in transition from Part C to Part B.
- Performance Indicator #34 in the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Self-assessment of Special Education Planning Districts was that "Each Part C student transitioning to Part B special education services will have an IEP implemented by third birthday." An analysis of the data indicates that out of 69 planning district self-assessments, 42 (60.9%) reported improvement or reported previous positive results. Twelve planning districts (17.4%) reported no improvement. The remaining 25 (29.3%) districts reported data for the first time (baseline data) so there was no data available for comparison.
- Districts providing a written explanation when third birthday timelines were not met indicated several reasons for not meeting individual child timelines. Examples included untimely referral information or untimely transition conferences by First Steps, parents declining services, move-ins within 30 days or less of turning three, referral sources other than First Steps, lack of evaluation staff, or missed parent appointments for evaluations or case conferences. The data documents a lack of uniform reporting. There is no way to distinguish valid reasons from invalid reasons when timelines are not met.
- In a current sample of 159 children transitioning from Part C to Part B, the data indicates First Steps Service Coordinators did not refer 30% of the children by the 90-day transition conference timeline. This data does not identify when the child entered the First Steps System. Further analysis of the data is required. If children in the sample were in the system but not referred this becomes a transition issue. If a

number of these children did not come into the Part C system until close to the third birthday, then this becomes a child find issue.

- The Division of Special Education in cooperation with First Steps did a study in the spring of 2000 to answer questions about the preschool population who had received early intervention services. When comparing the Part B Child Count data for children ages 3, 4, and 5 receiving early childhood special education and the Part C termination codes, one of the findings was that 301 children (56%) out of 535 had their initial case conference on or before the third birthday. The transition information analyzed by birth year reports a positive trend that the percentage of children with disabilities eligible under Part B who receive services by their third birthday is increasing.
- The majority of the comments during the Public Meetings were positive that transition planning is resulting in timely provision of needed supports and services. Public comments identifying concerns centered on issues of untimely transition experiences and problems with late spring and summer birthdays.

Strategies:

- Design the Part C database to track the number of Part C children who receive services in Part B by third birthday.
- Revise the local planning district performance indicator to report the specific reason a student does not receive services by the third birthday and include only children in transition from Part C to Part B. There needs to be consistency in coding across the two programs.
- The State Transition Team will implement marketing activities to bring Part B and Part C providers who are having transition difficulties into the Indiana State Transition Initiative.

Performance Indicator D:

All children not eligible for services under Part B are receiving other appropriate services by their third birthday.

Data Sources:

- Part C termination reports (1999 & 2000)
- 470 IAC 3.1, First Steps Early Intervention System State Rules
- First Steps Practice Manual

Conclusions:

- The Part C rules and procedures are aligned with the performance indicator. The Part C State Rules require “Local Planning and Coordinating Councils to support and facilitate the establishment of interagency agreements with participating agencies to ensure a smooth transition of eligible children from the early intervention system the early childhood special education system or to other appropriate services.” The Service Coordinator definition and Section 11 of the First Steps Practice Manual requires the service coordinator to plan for pre-school or other community services as appropriate when the child is not eligible for Part B and is no longer eligible for Part C.
- The Part C database codes the reason for termination for all children leaving the early intervention program. Transition codes include children who exit Part C with no services available or no services needed. Thirty-five (35) children exited with no services available and 379 exited with no services needed in calendar year 2000. In 1999, 13% of children exiting Part C (1303 children) who were not eligible for Part B received other community-based placements compared to 9% of those exiting Part C (1161 children) in 2000 who received community-based placements. This was a decrease in the number of families of children receiving other appropriate services.
- All children who go through First Steps are automatically considered for Children With Special Health Care Services. The children who exit First Steps at age three who are financially eligible for Children With Special Health Care Services continue to receive these services upon exiting First Steps. This information regarding other appropriate services is not included on the termination codes.
- The accuracy of the data is questionable due to the similarity of many of the termination codes and the lack of understanding of the definitions of exit codes. This is a difficult indicator to measure since it is not clear what “appropriate” services mean and there may be no funding mechanism to support other service options for children who are not eligible for Part C or Part B. This performance indicator does not address the number of children for whom the IFSP team determines need no further services or the decision of parents not to pursue services after the child exits First Steps.

Strategies:

- Revise exit codes so that they are more distinct and provide training on the definitions of the exit codes.
- Evaluate the Service Coordinator Training Curriculum to ensure that it includes the service coordinator's role and responsibilities for children who are exiting Part C and are not eligible for Part B. There is a lack of common understanding of early intervention responsibility and community-based provider responsibility for coordination and provision of services after the child exits Part C.
- Include follow-up of children who exit Part C in the First Steps Annual Performance Report.

Performance Indicator E:

Opportunities for community-based services for children exiting Part C and not eligible for Part B, increase as a result of on-going program evaluation and systems capacity-building.

Data Sources:

- Bureau of Child Development informational brochures
- First Steps Annual Performance Report (2000)
- “Welcoming All Children” video and booklet
- First Steps Data and Claims Payment System County Profile Reports
- MAP to Inclusive Child Care Project
- Indiana Association of Child Care Resource and Referral “InclusionProject”

Conclusions:

- There are a variety of programs and resources in place to support systems capacity-building.
- First Steps has developed an integrated data and claims payment system as an on-going management tool for counties. The county profile report is disseminated on a quarterly basis. It provides each county a snapshot report. The county information can be compared to the statewide data for the same period of time.

Strategies:

- Continue system-capacity building efforts and publicize these efforts to families. Develop a tracking system that will accurately report opportunities for community-based services.

Performance Indicator F:

Positive results from parent satisfaction surveys, when available, increase.

Data sources:

- Part C Monitoring Guide

Conclusions:

- There is no statewide data from parent satisfaction surveys. The state does not have a consistent method of collecting on-going data. Parent satisfaction data is collected locally. This data is not uniform.
- The State Monitoring Guide for the peer quality review process requires that Local Planning and Coordinating Councils conduct a family satisfaction survey that addresses at least system point of entry functions, on-going service provision issues, and transition from Part C to Part B. The survey must be done every two years and is available for the LPCC, providers, and parents to read. This data is not collected at the state level but is reviewed during the quality review process.

Strategies:

- First Steps in collaboration with Indiana's State Transition Team has developed a parent satisfaction survey on transition. This survey will be mailed to families receiving early intervention services.

Performance Indicator G:

What is the percentage of children leaving Part C services to Part B services who are placed in inclusive preschool or other settings

Data Sources:

- TABLE 3, Part B Individuals With Disabilities Education Act Implementation of FAPE Requirement, form OMB: 1820-0517

Conclusions:

- There is no specific data source that reports the number and percentage of children leaving Part C services to Part B services who are placed in inclusive preschool or other settings.
- The Office of Special Education requires states to maintain data on implementation of the Free Appropriate Public Education. There are six placement codes used to identify the setting of services. The early childhood placement code (LRE type 20) is the most applicable code to measure inclusive settings. Children in this setting receive all of their special education and related services in programs designed primarily for children without disabilities. The federal data report separates data for 3, 4, and 5 year-old children with disabilities. The data includes all eligible children rather than only children leaving Part C services to Part B services. Forty-three (43%) percent of 3, 4, and 5-year-old children with disabilities receive all of their service in early childhood settings and six percent (6%) receive at least part-time services in early childhood settings. There is no data system in place to uniformly measure this performance indicator.

Strategies:

- Develop a data source to uniformly measure this performance indicator for three-year-old children leaving Part C services to Part B services. There needs to be consistency in coding across Part C and Part B.